

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for providing network protection at input/output interfaces of a cross-connect switch, comprising:

receiving an inbound working channel and an inbound protection channel at an input interface;

determining a signal quality of the inbound working and protection channels;

selecting one of the inbound working and protection channels in response to the signal quality of the inbound working and protection channels;

providing the selected one of the inbound working and protection channels to a switching matrix.

2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

receiving a plurality of inbound working channels;

providing a protection switch request to an originator of the inbound working channels and inbound protection channel;

selecting two of the plurality of inbound working channels and the inbound protection channel;

providing traffic from the selected two of the plurality of inbound working traffic from the inbound working channels and the protection channel.

3. The method of Claim 2, wherein the network protection is a 1:n linear APS protection scheme.

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10. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
maintaining connections in the switching matrix
regardless of the selection of one of the inbound working
and protection channels.

11. An apparatus for providing network protection at a cross-connect switch, comprising:

an input interface operable to receive an inbound working channel and an inbound protection channel, the input interface operable to determine a signal quality of each of the inbound working and protection channels, the input interface operable to select one of the inbound working and protection channels according to the determined signal qualities;

a switching matrix operable to receive a selected one of the inbound working and protection channels, the switching matrix operable to output the selected one of the inbound working and protection channels over a pre-determined matrix connection, the switching matrix maintaining matrix connections regardless of which one of the inbound working and protection channels is selected.

12. The apparatus of Claim 11, further comprising:

an output interface operable to receive the selected one of the inbound working and protection channels, the outbound interface operable to broadcast the selected one of the inbound working and protection channels onto an outbound working channel and an outbound protection channel.

13. The apparatus of Claim 11, wherein the input interface receives a plurality of inbound working channels, the input interface operable to select two of the inbound protection channel and plurality of inbound working channels.

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